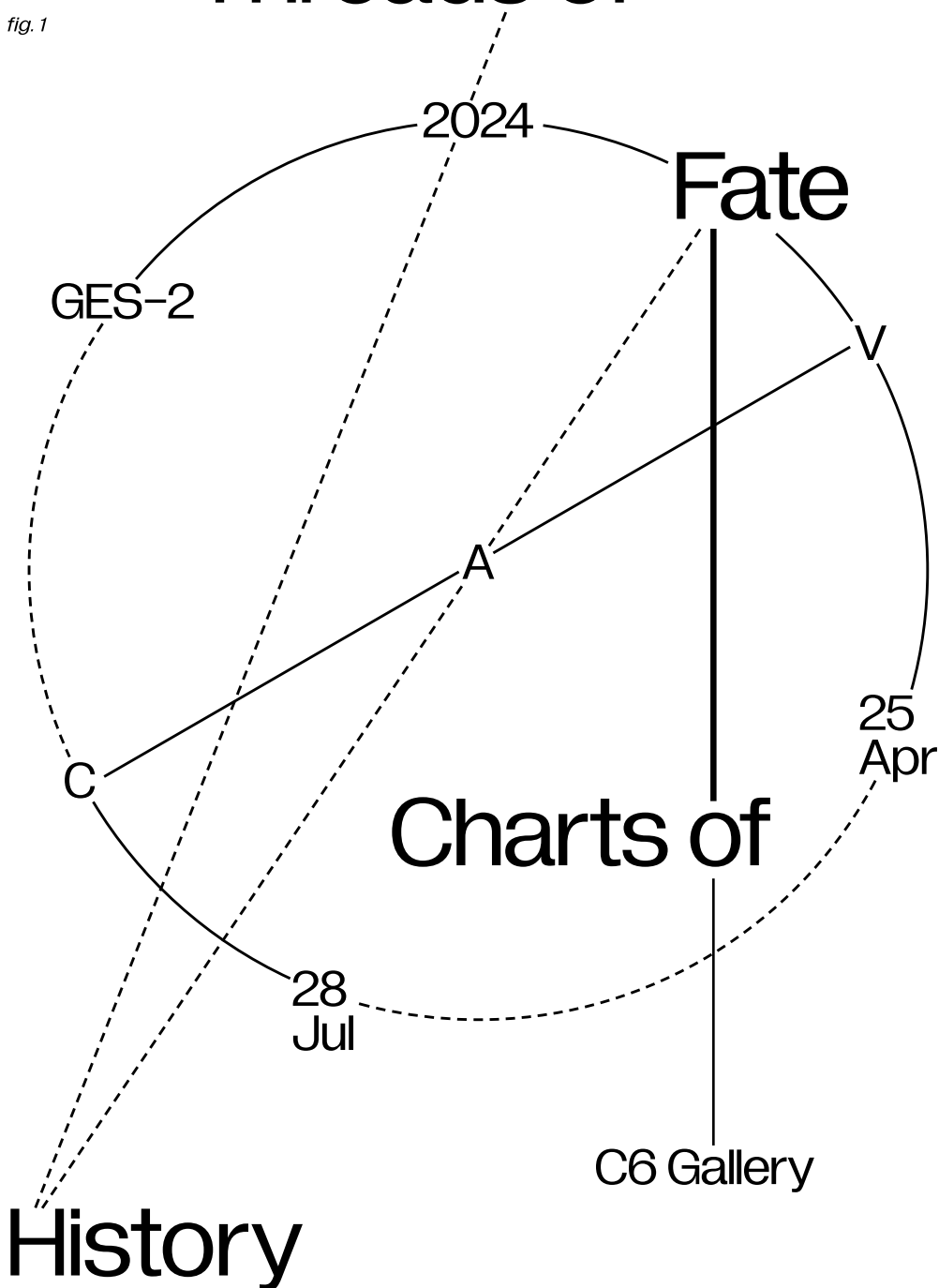


Threads of

fig. 1



Threads of Fate, Charts of History

25 Apr—28 Jul 2024

What brought us here? Curiosity, accident—or, perhaps, fate itself? At times, it can seem that life is a series of coincidences, at others that it is a well-ordered, even predetermined system. *Threads of Fate, Charts of History* is an exhibition dedicated to the idea of fate and the mythology associated with it. Interpretation is of greater importance to *Threads of Fate, Charts of History* than predetermined plots—as in a myth, what you see in the exhibition is what you were intended to see.

Fate acts as an external force, it surpasses man and is not subject to man's authority. This said, the unpredictability and inexplicability of fate coexist with the interrelation of phenomena and universal regularity. In the mythologies of different cultures, fate acts as the guardian of universal order and equilibrium on a scale incomprehensible to man. Fate can serve to explain or justify events in human lives. However, by associating itself with higher powers and outside causes, mankind finds itself confronted with the question of how choices are made and to what extent free will can be said to exist. How should we behave in the face of fate—humbly take its blows or, like the heroes of myths, seek to challenge it?

Mythologies that address the notion of fate are founded on a particular conception of time and man's place within it. Mythological time is cyclical. Each ensuing twist repeats the one that preceded it and at the same time differs from it—in the same way that days and years differ from one another. Mythological heroes exist at once in and outside time. The changes to human life that come with every new era renew these connections in time and tighten the threads that run between reality and mythology. But to what extent are the historical events and phenomena that stand before humankind in the form of fate repeatable or explainable?

The works featured in this exhibition explore various facets of the concept of fate. The view of fate proposed by each artist is different, but their works are united by a shared interest in both the ways in which mythological categories persist today and in what they can tell us about ourselves. The works of Lyudmila Baronina, Katya Isaeva, Rodion Kitaev, and Mayana Nasybullova are distinguished by an attempt to see the world in the present moment. They explore the directions that can be taken by fate and the coordinates according to which we can attempt to understand it—in doing so, they address the earthly and the cosmic, the natural and the artificial, free will, freedom of choice, and predetermination. Though plots of the myths and novels may be predetermined,

their interpretations can differ: freedom is to be found in the fact that each of us is free to choose for ourselves how to read the signs of fate and compose them into a chart of history.

Katya Isaeva

(p. 1980)

Your turn. Vorobyev, 2024

Chess board with pieces, bench, display case with works by Boris Vorobyev and archival materials

Commissioned and produced by GES-2 House of Culture

Katya Isaeva's work comprises a chess board populated by animal figurines and a display case dedicated to the life and work of the Soviet artist and animalist Boris (Isai) Vorobyev (1911–1990). Isaeva's chess board resonates with a quotation from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* engraved on a bench that stands nearby. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche considered the transformations of the soul and the freedom of human will in a metaphorical key. According to Nietzsche, the soul goes through three consecutive metamorphoses—the camel, the lion, and, finally, the child. The weight-bearing camel must first become a lion and “create itself freedom for new creation.” The lion must then become a playing child, unrestrained by conventionality—only then does the spirit become able to create its own world—that is, to realise its will.

The display case that accompanies Isaeva's chess board contains porcelain and celluloid figurines, sculptures, and graphic works by Boris Vorobyev. When he finished his studies at the Leningrad Academy of Arts in the 1940s, Vorobyev dared to present a wooden sculpture of a trapped she-wolf as his graduation project, instead of the expected socialist realist portraits, landscapes, or battle scenes. Vorobyev was able to resist the anger of the traditionalists and stand by his decision. In doing so, he paved the way for the inclusion of animalism in official Soviet exhibitions. From the middle of the 1940s, Vorobyev created animal figurines for the Lomonosov porcelain factory. These miniature beasts could be found in almost every Soviet home.

The celluloid camel and lion figurines that stand on Isaeva's chess board were first produced at the Okhta chemical plant based on sketches by Vorobyev in the 1940s. Production ceased in the 1960s, when celluloid was deemed too much of a fire hazard to be used in children's toys. In the display case that accompanies her chessboard, Isaeva casts Vorobyev's fate as the embodiment

of Nietzsche's reasoning—both camel and a lion, he lived with the she-wolf and flew with the eagle, and surrendered to youthful love for the world of animals and games of the imagination.

Lyudmila Baronina

(b. 1988)

Pose, 2024

Additive manufacturing, PETG plastic, wood, acrylic

Commissioned and produced by GES-2 House of Culture

Lyudmila Baronina's three 3D-printed human figures in birch pose, or, as they would put it in yoga, sarvangasana, attest to syncretism, to the borrowing and bringing together of elements from different cultures that is characteristic of modernity. Yoga seeks to strengthen not just the body but the mind and the soul, lending life balance and opening a reality beyond the limits of causality. In the philosophy of this discipline, there is no strict connection between cause, action, and consequence. Any duality becomes a harmonic unity, and the fate of man is inseparable from the fate of the world. This concept of mutual exchange between the life forces of man and the energy of the Universe resonates with discussions of the Anthropocene, in which man is not set against surrounding nature but rather understood as one of a multitude of equivalent ecosystems.

Mayana Nasybullova

(b. 1989)

Untitled Cycle, 2024

Ceramics, motion design, sound design

Commissioned and produced by GES-2 House of Culture

A ceramic vine weaving around the surface of a cube and partly creeping along the floor, and a video with 3D animation flickering through the cracks of this cube are the two inextricably linked elements of Mayana Nasybullova's work. The vine's branches were digitised and animated to create a video in which the natural cycles of birth and decay are represented as the condensing and scattering images of a wild plant of the virtual world. The cracking of ceramic after firing serves as the soundtrack to the work. Mayana Nasybullova's *Untitled Cycle* exists at the intersection of mediums—of the crafted and the technological, the natural and the virtual, of free plasticity and ordering algorithms. The vine personifies natural forces that are, as ever, beyond the control of man, no matter how he tries to "tame" them.

Rodion Kitaev

(b. 1984)

Abandoned Daughter, 2024

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

Behind the Black Bathhouse, 2024

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

Long Night Voyage, 2024

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

Over Eternal Memory, 2024

Textile, polymer clay, leather, wood, found objects

Seekers of Happiness, 2024

Textile, hand embroidery

*All works commissioned and produced
by GES-2 House of Culture*

The female figures that appear in the works of Rodion Kitaev are borrowed from myth, literature, and cinema—among them, one finds references to the ancient story of the abduction of Europa, to the Russian fairy tale about Snegurochka (the Snow Maiden), to works by the Silver age poet Fyodor Sologub and to films such as the Danish director Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* and Alexander Ptushko's *Sadko*. As they appear in Kitaev's works, these figures are addressed at once as fictional characters that retain their connections to their predetermined stories and as images captured the moment before anything had happened, when their respective plots had not yet run their courses. Kitaev seems to suggest that fateful events might have unfolded differently, and this suggestion disturbs the cyclicity characteristic of myth, altering the function of time in the equation. The doll Kitaev has created resembles both a Baba Yaga (a Slavic forest monster that takes the shape of an old woman) and an ancient Egyptian mummy, yet it does not inhabit a mythological timelessness—it belongs to an eternity that peers into the future.

Curator

Elena Yaichnikova

Authors

Lyudmila Baronina
Katya Isaeva
Rodion Kitaev
Mayana Nasybullova

Architecture

Sasha Kim

Light

Ksenia Kosaya

Producers

Sasha Chistova
Maria Pogodina

Technical production

Andrey Belov
Artem Kanifatov
Maxim Lapshin
Mikhail Sarkisyants

**Art logistics
and registration**

Daria Krivtsova
Ekaterina Narkizova

**Accessibility
and inclusion curators**

Vlad Kolesnikov
Vera Zamyslova

Graphic design

Maria Kosareva

Editors

Daniil Dugaev
Olga Grinkrug
Alexandra Kirillova

English texts

Charlotte Neve
Simon Patterson

The exhibition

***Threads of Fate, Charts
of History* is organised
in collaboration with**

Museum of the
Academy of Arts
Private archive
of Boris Vorobyev's family
The State Darwin Museum

12+